

## FAST RAILWAY TRAINS.

THE BEST REGULAR SERVICE IN THE WORLD.

AMERICA LEADS ON SHORT RUNS AND FRANCE FOR LONG DISTANCES.

A careful comparison of the speeds made by the best railway trains of the world shows that at the present time the highest honors are held by the United States and France. England comes third. From a carefully compiled table recently published in "The London Times" it appears that the best long distance runs in the United Kingdom are from London to Glasgow (up the west coast) and Edinburgh (near the east coast). The former route is 401½ miles long, and is covered in exactly eight hours, which makes an average of 50.18 miles an hour. The Edinburgh route is eight miles shorter, and 7 hours and 45 minutes is the schedule time for the fastest train, or an average of 50.77. The Empire State Express, in the United States, traverses 440 miles in 8 hours and 15 minutes, making an average of 53.33 miles an hour. This train is compelled to slacken speed no less than twenty-eight times, owing to the number of crowded streets through which it passes. The Empire State is beaten by two French trains. The "Sud" express, on the Orléans and Midi roads, between Paris and Bayonne, runs 486¼ miles in 8 hours and 59 minutes. The average speed is 54.13 miles an hour. The Orléans road also has a train between Paris and Bordeaux (363¼ miles) whose time is 6 hours and 42 minutes, or 54.2 miles an hour. A correspondent of "The Times" declares, however, that the "Sud" express is a light train, and that the locomotive has only about one-third of the work to do which is performed by the big English express engines.

France has four trains that make even better speed than this, for distances very much less than those just mentioned, and yet exceeding one hundred miles. Three of them cover 123 miles, and one 135½. The average speeds here developed are 54.7, 55.8, 57.1 and 57.7.

But when it comes to distances of less than one hundred miles, France retires to the second place. She has more than a score of trains that develop a speed of from 55 to 60.5 miles an hour in runs of from 25 to 96 miles. Her best record for short distances is on the line between Moreux and Bordeaux. There 67¼ miles are traversed at an average of 61.6 miles an hour. England has only about eight trains comparable with these. A run of 73¼ miles on the Great Northern, between Peterborough and Finsbury Park, is made at an average speed of 55.3 miles, and the rate on the London and Southwestern is 60.1.

In the United States the New-York Central covers the 95 miles between Albany and Utica at the rate of 55.8 miles an hour, and 80 miles between Syracuse and Rochester at 57.1 miles. But the best American speed has been made over the Reading and Pennsylvania roads between Philadelphia and Atlantic City. The former line is 55½ miles long and the other 59. Several trains a day have been running for the last two or three years at an average speed of 55.5 miles an hour. But there were two trains each way on each road that went faster than a mile a minute. The schedule time of the Reading road was 55½ miles in 50 minutes, or at the rate of 66.6 miles an hour.

For two months, though, in 1898, the Reading flyer was ahead of schedule time on all but two secular days. The actual running time ranged from 44½ to 49½ minutes. The speed was more frequently above than below an average of 70 miles. Twice it was 73.2, once 73.6, and once 74.4. Occasionally at the point where the two roads crossed each other at grade the Reading would be held up by a signal, and a little time would be lost. But the latter was always made up, though the final third of the run sometimes developed a speed of 85 or 90 miles!

## PAPER DRIVING OUT PARCHMENT.

From The London Star.

"May be written on paper" instead of parchment, as hitherto!

It seemed a revolution. Yet such was the decision of Mr. Justice Barnes, in the Probate Court. Copies of wills and "probate pieces" to be proved were the items in question. After this the deluge.

Changing the immemorial parchment tradition looked worse than trifling with the equator. It was, if military parlance be allowable, like cutting our communications with the austere and reverend past.

Now that we have grown reckless and new-fangled in our notions, how shall we end?

In sundry ways the parchment sphere of influence has been checked of late. Solicitors have developed a mild passion for paper, and given it their preference over parchment wherever possible. The cynical view was expressed that, while all this meant a gain to the solicitor, it would be no saving whatever to the client.

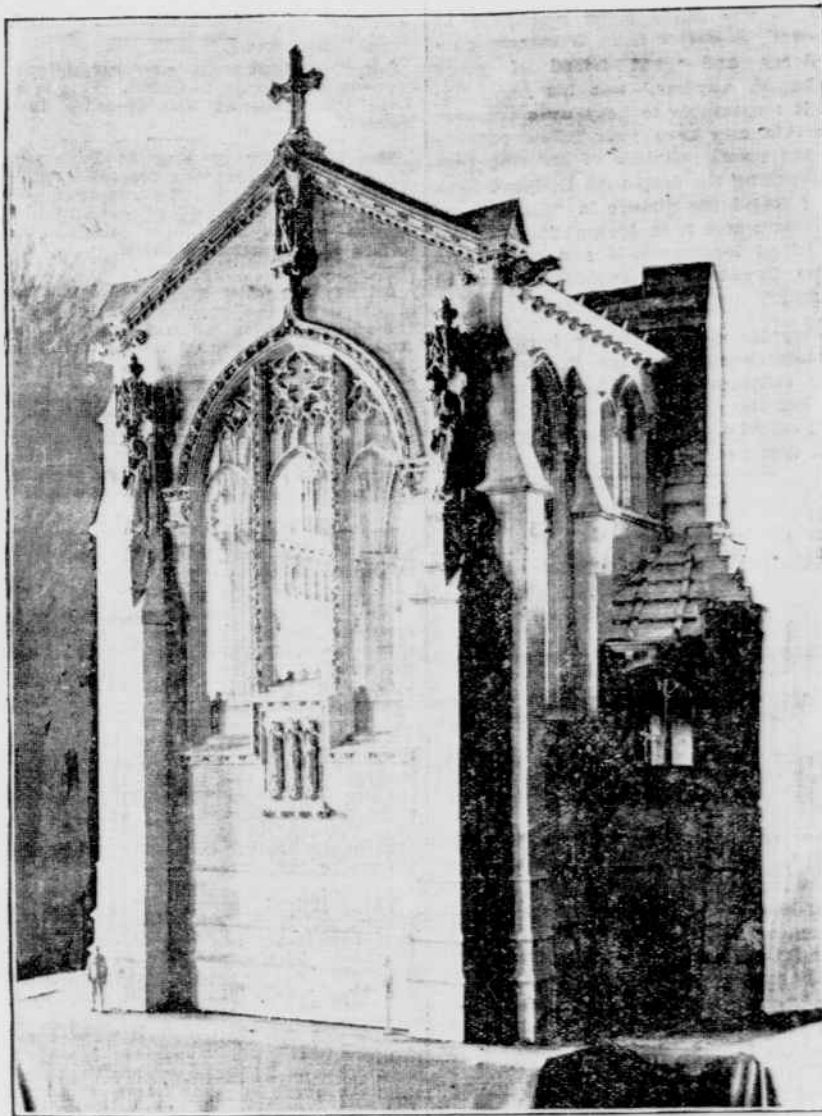
The parchment makers and dealers take the outlook with as much philosophy as can be expected.

## SUBMARINE NAVIGATION.

Paris dispatch to The Pall Mall Gazette.

The Maritime Prefect of Cherbourg, with the view of avoiding accidents, has issued a series of regulations to be observed in connection with the manoeuvres of the submarine torpedo boats. These regulations are chiefly interesting, perhaps, as showing the activity with which the experiments with the submarine boats are being pursued.

The submarine boats, the official note states, are fitted at each end when manoeuvring with a long, thin metal pole carrying a distinctive flag. When the boats are being navigated near the surface the vessels they may encounter are to treat them as if they were sailing ships.



PLASTER MODEL OF THE BELMONT MEMORIAL CHAPEL.  
For the Cathedral of St. John the Divine.

Whenever a submarine boat is engaged in manoeuvres it is accompanied either by a torpedo boat or by a steam launch. The escorting boat carries a white ball at its stern instead of the French flag as an indicator that there is a submarine boat in the vicinity. All craft on perceiving the ball are to steer to the stern of the torpedo boat or launch. The notice further contains the information that in a general way the submarine torpedo boat Morse manoeuvres every Monday and Saturday and occasionally on Wednesdays.

## CHINESE MILITARY TRAINING.

From The London Chronicle.

One of the textbooks studied by Chinese officers is the Sun-tse, which is about three thousand years old. The characteristic feature of this work on Chinese military art is its insistence that the general ought, before everything else, to study ruses, some of which are not strictly connected with war. The student of Sun-tse is told to "negotiate with the enemy, and while you are discussing the situation massacre him; sow discord in his camp, intercept his provisions and soften his heart by voluptuous music and the sight of beautiful women." As to military measures, the Chinese general receives the following advice: "If you are ten times more numerous than the enemy envelop him; if you are five times more numerous dispose your army so as to attack him on four sides; if you are only a little stronger content yourself by cutting your army in two (on the principle of reserves); and if you are weaker than the enemy try to secure cover." De Wet must surely have been a diligent student of Sun-tse's military counsels.

## BIG PRICES FOR MAFKING STAMPS.

From The London Post.

Doubtless everybody who does not collect postage stamps will read with mild amazement this morning of the prices paid yesterday for the stamps issued in Mafeking while it was besieged. One complete set went at 38 guineas.

Eighteen of the small blue stamps which carry the portrait of Colonel Baden-Powell fetched 15 guineas; another lot, consisting of sixteen of these stamps, together with four "B.-P." shilling notes, realized 26 guineas. The person who does not collect stamps may be derisive, but we are inclined to congratulate the buyers of these lots on the bargains they obtained. It is known that there were very few of the Mafeking stamps issued, while the number of stamp collectors throughout the world—each of whom will desire to possess them—is to all intents and purposes unlimited. The British philatelist has taken during the last few years to scorning all stamps which do not belong to Great Britain and her colonies. Those that he can accept have therefore risen, and still are rising, in price, and the rarer they are the more rapidly does their value in the market increase. These "Mafeking besieged" stamps are not merely rare. They have, and will always keep, a genuine historical interest, so that even the man who looks on the collector as a foolish child would like to possess them. Consequently they are bound to rise in value, and in the near future it is certain the gentleman who bought a complete set at 38 guineas will be regarded as a person of amazing good fortune.

## WEIGHT OF ELEPHANTS' TUSKS.

From The London Globe.

Sir Samuel Baker gives the weights of the largest African elephant tusks he ever saw as 172 and 188 pounds, respectively. Tiffany & Co., of New-York, have now a pair weighing respectively 224 and 239 pounds. Their corresponding sizes are: Length, 10 feet ¾ inches, and 10 feet ¾ inches; circumference, 23 inches and 24½ inches. The tusks of the extinct Elephas ganessa were sometimes 12 feet 4 inches long, and 2 feet 3 inches around. A mammoth tusk from Alaska is 12 feet 10 inches long and 22½ inches around, but the average tusks of this animal are 7 feet to 9 feet long and only 60 pounds to 80 pounds in weight. The tusks of the mastodon are thicker than those of the mammoth, a large one being 9 feet 4 inches long and 23 inches around.

## WORK ON THE CATHEDRAL.

BUTTRESSES AND PIERS BUILDING—  
CHOIR TO BE READY FOR INSIDE  
WORK NEXT SPRING—THE  
BELMONT CHAPEL.

The great arch on Cathedral Heights, which is all that the distant observer can see of the growing Cathedral of St. John the Divine, has attracted more than ordinary attention of late because of the additions that have been made in its general appearance. Subsidiary arches are gradually rising toward the central structure, and buttresses and piers show where the lofty choir will be. Eight monoliths more than sixty feet high will support the ambulatory of the apse. The piers for these columns are already in place, but the columns themselves have not yet left the Maine quarry from which they were hewn.

These ponderous parts of the great structure may be seen from a distance; but one must go within the shadow of the arch to realize that much work which is not visible from afar has been done. In the crypt, which has been fitted as a beautiful chapel, one may gain an idea of the subterranean work. The architects hope that the choir, which, when completed, will be about one-tenth of the structure, will be advanced so far by next spring that interior work may be begun.

Aside from the cathedral proper, space has been assigned for a series of chapels. These will be built as funds for them are available, and their erection will in no way interfere with the progress of the main structure.

Three of these chapels will be placed on either side of the choir, and one behind the main altar. The central chapel will be the most important, because it will occupy a commanding position, about 500 feet above the Cathedral Parkway, so that its own height will be greatly accentuated by its location. The funds for the building of this chapel have already been given by August Belmont, who has placed the sum of \$200,000 at the disposal of the Board of Trustees for that purpose.

When the cathedral is finished and one enters and passes down the main aisle from the western portal the great altar will hide the Belmont Chapel completely, and in order to reach it the visitor will have to pass into the ambulatory and thence past the choir stalls on one side and other chapels on the other to a point directly behind the main altar, where he will see the Belmont Chapel. At the entrance will be a Romanesque arch supported by piers ornamented by five statues each. Beyond this arch will be the vaulted roof. There will be low Gothic windows and vistrary portals, and the whole interior will be treated in the Gothic style.

## BARKLESS DOGS.

From Chambers's Journal.

I knew a man who trained his dog never to bark. Three years were necessary for perfect success in the making of a non-barking dog, and my friend flattered himself that he had a novelty. But I am inclined to think that he would not have wasted those three years had he known that there are at least three varieties that never bark—the Australian dog, the Egyptian shepherd dog and the "lion-headed" dog of Thibet. In some Japanese cities a non-barking dog would be deemed valuable, for there they have a quaint law which makes the owner of a night barker liable to arrest, and the penalty of a year's work for the benefit of neighbors who may have been disturbed. The fact that the barking of a dog on the earth can be heard by a balloonist at a height of about four miles does not appeal to the average man so much as the fact that that same barking can often be heard four streets away.

## A FAITHFUL LIKENESS.

From The Philadelphia Press.

Artist—Here is the portrait of your wife which—

Mr. Richman—Ah! It's very like her.

Artist—She—er—h'm—she didn't pay for it. She said you'd do that.

Mr. Richman—Ah! Still more like her.



A GRANITE COLUMN FOR THE NEW CATHEDRAL.

At Wharf's Quarry, Vinalhaven, Me. Its dimensions are 64 ft. x 8 ft. 6 in. x 7 ft., and its weight 310 tons.  
(Photograph by Randall.)